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War Messages
to
The American People

WAR AIMS

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War Aims

All the world around the war has aroused dormant half-formed hopes of a democracy yet to come into a living, active conviction. Many nations and many millions of people are resolved to make this the last world war and they know so bold an aim can only be accomplished when systems of government centered about Kings and Kaisers are gone forever. Republics do not seek world empire; they do not wage war for indemnities and gain; they do not deal in international intrigue and fill other lands with paid spies and plotters. Intelligent people of all lands are rapidly dividing in consequence into two classes: the progressives who having lost their confidence in Kings, look forward to representative government, constitutions, elections, votes for the people as the safest form of government; and the reactionaries who, afraid of the people, cling to Kings, edicts, dictation, caste, ceremony

and a subservient population. The issue is growing clearer day by day.

How far the impulse to democracy has permeated the peoples of the world no one knows but that it has gone far and will go further is proved by overwhelming evidence. Already the predictions are many that when the end of the war gives indications of a guarantee of permanent peace, an assurance that the world at last has been made "safe for democracy," the nations big and little will make a clean sweep of thrones and Kings. How soon after the war the last crown will fall, depends upon the degree of decisiveness of the final victory, but fall it will.

For more than a century the United States has been the world leader in democratic progress. It has pointed the way and "blazed the trail" for all the peoples of earth. Our forefathers had the foresight to conceive and to establish a representative government when most great men of all nations denounced the idea as visionary and impractical. They bravely led on, still in combat with world prejudice, and made ours

the first country to enfranchise the Jew, the Catholic, the non-landholder, the alien, the working man. Our Republic gave the theory and also the proof of its trustworthiness in practice. It demonstrates that a Republic is a system of "checks and balances" wherein the virtuous, the wise, the temperate neutralize the evil minded, the foolish, the extremist, and thus not only makes a popular government safe and sound; but incidentally supplies an educational influence which uplifts the entire people.

A despairing world would not now turn with rising hope to the possible transformations of monarchies into republics as a safeguard against world war had not the United States lived down the world's doubts and objections and offered a proved example.

The United States entered the war because its ideals were jeopardized. It bore insults and violations of treaties and witnessed the undoing of innocent peoples by "ruthless depredations," but it did not decide to fight until it was clear that the war had resolved itself into a death grapple

between the systems of autocracy and those of democracy. It was a mere onlooker until the evidence was overwhelming that the "powers of progress were desperately striving against the forces of darkness." The accumulating testimony made plain that one of two things was certain to happen; either German militarism, commanded by a Kaiser whose will is law, must surrender or every nation will be forced to set up universal military service, permanent conscription and oppressive taxes to support the system. To do otherwise would mean to live in perpetual fear of the marauding hordes that have laid waste the lands and destroyed the people of Belgium, Northern France, Servia, Roumania, Poland, Armenia and Syria. So, to make the "world safe for democracy," to prevent one nation from dictating the institutions of every other, our Republic went into the war, and entered it, too, with a will to give "all that we have and all that we are" and to see it through to its final victory, even though it shall take a generation.

But what is the democracy for which the world is battling and for which we offer

our man power, our woman power, our money power, our all? Government of the world by consent of the individual nations; government of the nations by consent of the individual people. Nothing more, never less. The United States stands for the autonomy of the small nations, the little peoples that have been the pawns upon the royal chessboard of Kings for a thousand years. It stands for their incontestable right to govern themselves in their own way without fear of their neighbors. It stands for the right of dependent lands to decide for themselves whether they will be independent, and, if not, to what larger power they will choose to be attached. These are our war aims, our ideals. They are worth fighting for and worth dying for; the future peace and welfare of the world depend upon the result.

All these aims call for votes; there can be no self-determination of peoples as to their form of government without votes. Who is to cast them? The nobility, the landed aristocracy, a few men or the people? Our

country professes to mean "the people." But does it? Is it sincere? Is our own nation governed by consent of the people? *No.*

The enfranchisement of women is far more obviously inevitable today than was the enfranchisement of the working man a hundred years ago, yet our Republic has hesitated, floundered, avoided and evaded the issue while other nations, apparently of clearer vision and of braver temper, have seized the banner of leadership so long borne by our country and they, not we, are now marching at the head of the world procession of democracy.

Great Britain and Canada have each enfranchised their women within a year and have freed their suffrage armies from the burden of future campaigns, while at the same time they have given to the world a pledge of their honesty that they are fighting democracy's battle. Great Britain gave the vote by the same bill to two millions of men who had never had the vote before. Years ago Australia and New Zealand had enfranchised men and women on equal

terms, and wherever the British flag flies there is some form of suffrage for women. The Scandinavian countries, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, have already given universal suffrage to men and women. The King of Sweden has recommended and the majority party has pledged to make the partial suffrage long enjoyed by women in that country a complete suffrage. The King of Belgium has said that if ever his land is restored, one of his first acts will be to give women the vote. The French Chamber of Deputies has promised women the vote. The Premier of Italy has eloquently espoused the cause of suffrage and has pledged his party to extend women the vote. Processions of petitions and even street riots in Hungary have demanded the vote for men and women and it has been partially promised (May 1, 1918). The provincial government of Russia, before it was overturned by anarchy, included women in the voting electorate as a matter of course. The question of votes for women has even been discussed in the German Reichstag. These facts are but signs and symptoms of

the wide spread change in thought and theory of government throughout the world. Each new pronouncement of leaders or parties or nations for man or woman suffrage stimulates the further extension of democratic feeling everywhere and brings nearer the victory for the "powers of progress." No action has been taken by any allied country since the war began which has checked or discouraged the spread of democratic ideals. On the contrary, after definite promises from the Kaiser of franchise reform for men, the Prussian Parliament (Diet) defeated the proposal on May 2, 1918, by a vote of 235 to 181. It was an act characteristic of the "forces of darkness."

The world expects America to be true to her ideals, to live up to the noble war aims she has set for herself. "In all governments truly republican, men are nothing—principle is everything," said Daniel Webster. The principle which has been the mainstay of our progress is representative government, but ours will only become representative when *all* of the people give consent

to the representatives entrusted with the law-making and law-enforcing power of the land. The only class left out is women—graduates of high schools and colleges; mothers who are to send millions of sons to France; women who are to pay the war taxes, buy Liberty Bonds and take the places of men in munition plants, factories and fields, the army at home which alone makes it possible for the army in France to fight. Strange exception! Yet women are already voters over a vast territory of the world. That they will vote everywhere no enlightened person questions. To deny them the vote longer in any part of this country makes of our war aims a travesty and a lie. It offers vindication to the German claim that America pretends to lofty aims but they are mere talk!

As the Irish problem, which should have been settled long ago, now rises to challenge the sincerity of Great Britain in its war aims of self determination for such small nations as Belgium and Poland, so the woman question here with its settlement long overdue rises to make men and nations question our

sincerity. As the Irish problem weakens the morale of war support in Great Britain, so the woman problem in America lessens the ardor of war supporters here. The war will end and somewhere in the world the representatives of all the belligerent powers will gather to decide the terms of peace and international agreements to keep the peace. One great question will be the disposition of the despoiled countries. The aim of the Allies is to give them the right of decision. But who within each country shall have that right? Dead men buried in trenches cannot speak. Who then—the Germans now in occupancy, the refugee populations scattered to the four quarters of earth, or the few remaining native people? The discussion will be long. If, meanwhile, Great Britain has not granted self decision to her Ireland, the enemy will question her good intention. If, meanwhile, the United States has not enfranchised its women, and thus when it says government by the people, really means it, the enemy by the same reasoning which here excludes half the population may hold to the right of a "landed aris-

tocracy" to decide this most momentous peace question.

This nation will fight with its back to the wall for a clear-cut ideal, but the ideal must have no flaws. Ours has. As a nation we profess to stand for the annihilation of world political despotism, but a nation does not think clearly nor act logically when upon one hand it declares against the "Divine Right of Kings" and makes war upon the "King business" as an intolerable usurpation of authority, yet on the other hand maintains the "Divine Right" of males to rule over *all* the people in a land pledged to *self* government. By what line of thinking does an American justify the vote extended to an illiterate alien after a five years' residence and deny it to a woman college president? Is there any other word than despotism which defines the procedure? The despotism on the right and on the left differ only in degree. The famed defender of militarism, Treitsche, said: "We Germans, who know both Germany and France, know what suits the Alsatians far better than that miserable people knows itself."

Is there an American so lacking in humor that he fails to see the insufferable impertinence of that point of view?

A few days ago a United States Senator ejaculated "I'm opposed to giving the vote to women. We men know far better than they do themselves what they want." Treitsche's twin soul in the United States Senate dealing with aims in a war for democracy! May Heaven protect us! "To make us love our country our country ought to be lovely," said Edmund Burke. To make us love our country our country should be consistent.

"Find out what your enemy wants you to do and then don't do it. Find out what he doesn't want you to do and then do it," is a saying credited to more than one great military strategist. What does the Kaiser dread more than armies or navies? A democratic uprising in Germany which will have no place in its scheme of things for a King by Divine Right. What will induce such an uprising? The infection which will reach the Germans through the spread of such movements elsewhere. The German

papers did not print the news that Great Britain had enfranchised its last class of men who heretofore had not had the vote, about two millions in number, and that it had enfranchised its women, about six millions in number. Why? The Kaiser had planned to deny "one man one vote" to Prussian men and he feared the infectious influence of such news and the censors suppressed it. But the report will slowly seep into Germany through other channels and will do its work in time. When the United States extends the vote to women, will Germany be permitted to get the news? No, not through the ordinary channels, for no news of the spread of democracy must reach German ears. If it refuses to extend the vote to women at this time, will Germany get the news? Certainly. Why? Because the Kaiser is fighting to make the world safe for autocracy and he knows that its only real menace is democracy. His censors will try not to let the German people know that in the United States the President, Congress and the Legislatures have said once more that "government of the *peo-*

ple, by the *people* and for the *people* shall not perish from the earth." That they place no trust in Kings or Kaisers but do trust the people yea even the women. And the news "verboten" will creep through the bayonetted defenses slowly but surely and will revive hope and courage in every believer in democracy in Germany. The Kaiser stakes his all on the intimidation of the world through ruthless might of militarism led by autocracy. Why should our Republic hesitate while meeting might with might to plant in Germany the seeds of the only certain force which can permanently destroy autocracy and militarism — democracy? Great Britain and Canada have given the pledge of their sincerity in a war for democracy, why should the Great Republic balk? What does the Great Republic fear?

"German men are military slaves and German women mere door mats," said an American man the other day contemptuously. Perhaps they were yesterday, but what of tomorrow? Germany is dependent upon her man power at the front but she is equally dependent upon her woman power at home.

Women doubtless are fooled by the Kaiser's carefully guided publicity and believe as do the men that they are engaged in a war of defense, but there are at least two millions of German mothers and two millions of German wives or sweethearts who, mourning the death of their loved ones, are asking in the midst of their war weariness whether there is no better way of running a world than by the murder of war. Send them a ray of hope and send it now. It will brighten one day into redemption from military enslavement for the people of Germany and into consequent peace for the world.

"Democracy is the only possible enduring basis of the future peace of nations. Onward to Democracy. This will and must, tomorrow, be the battle cry of Europe in general, and of Germany in particular." [Herman Fernau, German author, in *The Coming Democracy*.]

Give to the world the final pledge of sincerity in American war aims. Give women of this land the honor other nations have bestowed upon theirs. Make democracy

triumphant at home that the Republic may war upon its treacherous enemy autocracy without a spot on the national escutcheon. Do it now.

Support the Federal Suffrage Amendment!

"While Europe's eye is fixed on mighty things
The fate of empires and the fall of kings;
While quacks of state must each produce his plan,
And even children lisp the Rights of man;
Amid this mighty fuss just let me mention,
The Rights of Women merit some attention."

—Robert Burns, November, 1792.

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